

**For Immediate Release
October 7, 2004**

**Contact: Andrea Ewin Turner
(615) 532-5645 (office)
(615) 418-3703 (cell)**

MTSU Lands Contract to Oversee State's DCS Training

Nashville, Tenn. - MTSU has been awarded a multimillion-dollar contract to oversee a 13-member university consortium effort to provide training for the State of Tennessee's Department of Children's Services (DCS) for the next five years beginning October 1.

Dr. Viola P. Miller, commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Children's Services, visited the MTSU campus on Thursday, Oct. 7, to formally announce MTSU's acquisition of the multimillion-dollar contract and help kick off the recently founded Tennessee Child Welfare Training Center. Miller said she is delighted with the new training program, which will make a difference in the lives of Tennessee's most needy citizens.

"Thorough and consistent training is essential in DCS's efforts to improve the lives and well-being of children in Tennessee," Miller said. "The development of the university consortium marks the implementation of desperately needed consistency in the training of our employees. We are thrilled about our partnership with MTSU and look forward to the growth and development of our staff through this program."

The contract, which is worth up to \$16 million its first year and renewable annually for five years, is the largest single contract that MTSU has ever been granted, reports Dr. Stacey Borasky, assistant professor of social work at MTSU and executive director of the newly created Tennessee Child Welfare Training Center (TCWTC), which is guided by a 13-member consortium board composed of representatives from both public and private universities throughout Tennessee.

In a 9-2 vote, MTSU was selected by members of the Tennessee Social Work Education Consortium (SWEC) to be the state's lead university in charge of overseeing the development and implementation of a revamped, statewide training program for all of DCS's case managers, social workers and other personnel.

Borasky said that the approach MTSU will bring to the training process is one that is based in social work-something that has not always been in place.

"By using social work-focused training, we expect to strengthen our state's DCS staff and make them more effective in their fields," Borasky explained. "The social work profession emphasizes that everyone has value and everyone should be treated with dignity and respect. With this kind of skill base, one can walk into crisis situations, and determine what needs to be done for the child and family both quickly and effectively."

As executive director of TCWTC, Borasky said it is her immediate goal to engage the members of the 13-school TSWE in helping her transition DCS's current training procedures to the soon-to-be implemented regional, training programs that have social work as their emphasis.

"In the past, DCS personnel had to travel to get the needed training, but we're hoping that by creating regional training sites at all of the universities that are in the 13-member consortium, we can fix it so that there won't have to be overnight stays away from home just to get training," remarked Borasky, who reported the MTSU-initiated training services will begin Jan. 1, 2005.

###